

APOSTLE TO THE BLIND  
Frank M. Rich

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**



are always filled for several weeks in advance. However, its program is flexible and "first things" are given preference over less pressing needs. In the absence of some new situation, there are always present the continuous or unsolved problems which need re-evaluation.

As a result of the workings of this Committee there has been an absence of misunderstanding and friction between various community groups. Through the work of the Committee each group under-

stands and respects the methods and procedures used by its co-workers. They find a common basis for attacking a problem and through a united effort usually can press for a satisfactory solution.

In the three years that the Committee has functioned there has been no serious conflict, and no wide difference of opinion has existed between groups represented. One of the results coming from the program is that someone

is on the job who is attempting to direct the solution of community problems in an intelligent manner.

The program has functioned without publicity or fanfare and it is reasonable to suppose that a majority of the citizens do not even know of the existence of the committee. It is safe to say, however, that any problem of consequence will receive the attention of the group before it has reached serious proportions.

# PEPPER RELISH by FRANK M. RICH

A sheaf of out-of-the-groove devices that will help to make activity programs not only progressive but practical and economical

## Apostle to the Blind

The 13th of November 1945 marks the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of one of the great heroes of world service—Valentin Haüy, commonly called the “Moses of the Blind.” To him, more than to any other individual, goes the credit of redeeming sightless millions from beggary and isolation, and opening to them the beauties of literature, music, science and mathematics, and the crowning satisfaction of making a living honorably.

Haüy's life is a little off the beaten path, a story of practical heroism and devotion. It will have a human appeal for students of composition, French, history, sociology; and for all "doers of the word, not hearers only." If we add to the account a simple experiment with raised writing for the blind, if only a tactful greeting to a veteran who has found a new need for this form of communication, the anniversary may borrow a rather special meaning at this time.

Valentin Haüy was a native of Picardy, a teacher of calligraphy and modern languages, and a translator of foreign dispatches for the government. His brother was the famous Abbe Haüy, pio-

neer in the science of crystallography.

The incident that turned Haüy's attention to the service of the blind was a strange concert, given in the courtyard of a Paris

inn. Beautiful music has often been an inspiration to noble endeavor, but in this case the inspiration came from an atrocious discord.

The Paris innkeeper, expecting

# BRAILLE ALPHABET

a b c d e f g h i j  
k l m n o p q r s t  
u v x y z Cap. Sign. w

## NUMBERS


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

## PUNCTUATION

• , : ; • : • : • ! : ( : ? " : :

• ,

• •

The six dots of the Braille cell are arranged and numbered thus:  The capital sign, dot 6, placed before a letter, makes it a capital. The first ten letters, preceded by the number sign, represent numbers. Punctuation marks are formed in the lower part of the cell.

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LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY



Norma—I.Q. 101; Silent Reading Level—Sept. 5.5; May 7.9

"Norma has read 18 books this year—the longer books of the seventh and eighth grade levels. She likes girl stories and mysteries. She is now reading at her mental grade level, having made two years and four months improvement in her silent reading this year. She is passing all of her other

subjects and has improved particularly in mathematics."

In conclusion we may say that many of our classroom problems dealing with subject matter achievement and behavior are the result of inadequate reading ability of the pupils concerned; that often the actual reading ability is far below the potential reading ability and when this is so, very gratifying results may be obtained

from a sound program of remedial instruction; that sound remedial treatment involves at least three important elements: (1) Careful diagnosis of specific weaknesses. (2) Small enough classes to allow the teacher to give a generous amount of time to each pupil, (3) Abundant opportunity for pupils to read widely at the level of their present ability.

## A COMMITTEE TO "NIP" COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

**BENJAMIN KLAGER**  
Superintendent of Schools  
Bay City, Michigan

FOR the past three years a group of five people has served as a Problem Appraisal Committee in this community and as a result of its work many knotty problems have been started on the road to solution or improvement.

The Committee, as the name implies, deals with social, educational, religious and recreational problems which have community-wide interest. The main function of the Committee is to appraise and evaluate such problems and then direct them to the agency or agencies best suited and equipped to improve the situation.

The Committee does not interfere with or attempt to dictate the program or methods followed by any particular group, but concerns itself only with those things which affect the community as a whole.

The personnel of the Committee is so constituted that there is a basis for understanding the various procedures that may be followed and if necessary the Committee is prepared to interpret them to the community at large.

The original group included the Executive Secretary of the Community Chest, the Superintendent of Schools, the President of the Ministerial Association, the Supervisor of Catholic Charities and Social Work, and a Jewish Rabbi. I do not know why this particular

group was assembled other than that a problem arising at that time required their consideration and possibly because most community problems are indirectly connected with the church, school or social service. The group has never been enlarged and meets regularly every Thursday noon. If a member cannot be present he names a substitute from the group he represents.

The five representatives discuss with utmost frankness the various social, religious, recreational and other community implications of certain problems. Each has an opportunity to explain his position or method of dealing with the particular situation. After careful appraisal of all factors concerned some common basis of approaching the solution to the problem is reached and the agency best suited to handle the situation is called into conference.

Usually as a result of such a conference, definite progress is made in outlining the procedure to be followed and the agency begins its work feeling that it has definite support and a common understanding of the need and things to be accomplished.

By this process a reasonable number of leaders in the community are made familiar with the problem and what progress is being made. Bulletins issued by

the Committee include an invitation to those who receive them to comment and offer suggestions on the procedure outlined and to present any problem which should have consideration.

Each member of the Committee is responsible for the interpretation of council deliberation to the group he represents and in this way a general recognition of the problem and a common interest in its solution are developed.

Any new activity or social problem that is not fully understood is analyzed by giving the official representative of such a group an opportunity to discuss their program with the Committee. Under this plan the purpose and function of The Children's Center, the State Experimental Program of Adult Education, the Visiting Teacher Program, the Veterans Council and the Health and Visiting Nurse Service of the community were carefully explained to the group.

Such problems as Week Day Religious Education, Juvenile Delinquency, Recreation for Youth, The Migrant Worker, Child Care Centers and many other subjects have been considered and directed to the agency best suited to deal with the problem involved.

The Agenda of the Committee



to attract a crowd of customers for his refreshment, hired eight or ten blind beggars from the streets of the city, tricked them out with long gowns, pointed hats, asses' ears and cardboard spectacles, seated them before music stands with untuned violins in hand, and instructed them to saw away as raucously as possible.

While other spectators rocked with mirth at the grotesque performance, or celebrated the joke with tippling companions, Haüy was profoundly moved with very different emotions.

"Valentin, lui, regardent de loin cette scène avec un mélange d'indignation et d'horreur.

"Est-ce possible! se disait-il, tourner ainsi en ridicule des infortunés qui sont réduits à la misère par leur ignorance. . . . Eh bien! moi, je substituerai la vérité à cette infame comédie, j'ai ferai lire les éveillés, je leur ferai exécuter des concerts harmonieux, je les tirerai de leur dépendance en leur donnant les moyens de gagner leur vie avec dignité."

Acting on his humane impulse, Haüy hired a blind beggar, François Le Sueur, one of a family of six small children, to become his first pupil. Thus Haüy not only furnished the instruction free, but paid for the privilege of giving it. Later the Philanthropic Society of Paris helped him to finance his experiments with several other pensioners.

Thus Haüy undertook a long program of technical research to develop practical reading and teaching methods for the sightless. A bare list of his undertakings is impressive. He worked out the question of raised lines versus intaglio. He stretched catgut over a board so as to enable blind writers to keep on the line. He had learners use a stylus to emboss tough paper placed on a yielding surface of pasteboard or leather to produce tactile characters. Learners used grooves in metal plates to emboss paper, so that when turned the raised lines could be read in re-

verse. He made maps by outlining patches in wet glue and sprinkling with sharp sand. He used iron wire for outlines and reproduced raised letters and diagrams in a press.

Remarking that the blind musicians of the time were mostly hired to be silent, he developed a system of music notation in raised characters and gave many creditable exhibitions with his blind orchestras. He developed methods of teaching profitable handicrafts like spinning, netting, sewing and book binding and so replaced beggary by industry.

Demonstrations of his pupils' attainments in these crafts, and in reading, writing, geography and arithmetic attracted widespread interest and emulation in Europe and in America. In 1806, on the invitation of Alexander I of Russia, he founded a school in St. Petersburg. Devotion and zeal were put to a severe test and rewarded with scanty gratitude; but Haüy lived to see his work bearing abundant fruit on every continent. Broken in health, he returned to France, and in March 1822 died in the arms of his beloved brother, the Abbe Haüy.

Another Frenchman, Louis Braille, shares the honor of perfecting characters so that the blind can now read and write about as fluently as the sighted. A person of average visual memory can learn to write the Braille alphabet in five minutes by the clock. Try it.

Fasten a square of wire mosquito netting over a similar

square of tough writing paper placed on a yielding surface of soft cardboard.

Indent dots with a dull pencil point through the square holes in the screen so as to make embossed characters that, when turned over in reverse, can be read with the fingers according to the alphabet furnished here.

Each letter of blind writing is some combination of the dots in a cell of six—arranged like the six on a domino—two vertical rows of three each; the first row numbered from the top 1, 2, 3; second row, 4, 5, 6.

The first 10 letters are made in the top 4 spaces: A is 1; B is 1,2; C—1,4; D—1,4,5; E—1,5; and so on. The next 5 letters with the exception of "I" look something like the Roman letters they represent. (See illustration).

The next row of 10 letters are a repetition of the first ten with a dot added in space number 3.

The rest of the alphabet—with the exception of the letter "W"—is a repetition of the second row with dot 6 added. Remember that Braille is a French innovation and the French alphabet has no "W". W is a reversal of R.

Numerals are a repetition of letters 1—10 preceded by the characters 3, 4, 5, 6.

Punctuation will call for a little extra feat of memory that may take another five minutes to master.

Contracted Braille is ingenious and saves much unnecessary writing, but that is another story.

**To Billy, Dead at Bastogne**  
**Florence B. Jacobs**

When you were six, I taught you how to read;  
Slowly and painfully and week by week  
Insisted that your restless mind should seek  
The skills and wisdoms for a later need,  
Tools that will not be used.

The bugles cry . . .  
Your gallant courage did not *have* to learn  
Response and love and sacrifice in turn. . . .

At twenty-one, you teach me how to die!



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